

thing else. He would find the mightiest strain of poetry employed to represent ferocious courage as the greatest of virtues, and those who do not possess it as worthy of their fate, to be trodden in the dust. He will be taught, at least it will not be the fault of the poet if he be not taught, to forgive a heroic spirit for finding the sweetest luxury in insulting dying pangs, and imagining the tears and despair of distant relations. He will be incessantly called upon to worship revenge, the real divinity of the Iliad, in comparison of which the Thunderer of Olympus is but a subaltern pretender to power. He will be taught that the most glorious and enviable life is that, to which the greatest number of other lives are made a sacrifice; and that it is noble in a hero to prefer even a short life attended by this felicity, to a long one which should permit a longer life also to others. The terrible Achilles, a being whom, if he had really existed, it had been worth a temporary league of the tribes then called nations to reduce to the quietness of a dungeon or a tomb, is rendered interesting even amidst the horrors of revenge and destruction, by the intensity of his affection for his friend, by the melancholy with which he appears in the funeral scene of that friend, by one momentary instance of compassion, and by his solemn references to his own impending and inevitable doom. A reader who has even passed beyond the juvenile ardour of life, feels himself interested, in a manner that excites at intervals his own surprise, in the fate of this fell exterminator; and he wonders, and he wishes to doubt, whether the moral that he is learning, be, after all, exactly no other than that the grandest employment of a great spirit is the destruction of human creatures, so long as revenge, ambition, or even caprice, may choose to regard them under an artificial distinction, and call them *enemies*. But this, my dear friend, is the real and effective moral of the Iliad, after all that critics have so gravely written about lessons of union, or any other subordinate moral instructions, which they discover or imagine in the work. Who but critics ever thought or cared about any such drowsy lessons? Whatever is the chief and grand impression made by the whole work on the ardent minds which are most susceptible of the influence of poetry, *that* shows the real moral; and Alexander, and Charles XII. through the